

March 1, 1874 The Life of Christ.--No. 12.

By Ellen G. White.

His Baptism.

After Jesus had been baptized of John in Jordan, he went straightway up out of the water to the bank of the river, and **bowed in the attitude of prayer**. A new and important era was opening before him, and he felt the solemnity and responsibilities of the new duties he was to perform, and heavier burdens which he was henceforth to bear. His baptism was the first act of his public ministry; and he here identifies himself with sinners as their representative, in taking upon him their sins, and numbering himself with transgressors. In his prayer, Christ, with his human arm, encircles fallen humanity, while with his divine arm he is reaching for the throne of the Infinite. {YI, March 1, 1874 par. 1}

His hands were raised upward, and his eyes were fixed as if penetrating Heaven; and he poured out his soul in supplication to his Father for strength to meet the unbelief and sinfulness of men, to break the power of Satan over man, and to be able to overcome Satan in behalf of man. He presented humanity before his Father, asking that He would grant to fallen man the Light and strength and power from His Own throne to successfully overcome the prince of the power of darkness.

The soul of Christ was burdened with the sense of the sinfulness of men, and the hardness of their hearts, that kept them in unbelief and darkness, so but few would discern His glorious mission and accept **the Salvation** (deliverance, freedom, healing) **He came from Heaven to bring them !**

Christ was about to enter upon a scene of fearful trial and temptation, which was to open His life to conflict and suffering. He was to perform new and arduous duties (steep, demanding, requiring hard and continuous physical effort), and bear heavy burdens, such as had never fallen to the lot of men. His sinless humanity supplicates support and strength from His Father as He was about to commence His labors. **He asks for the witness** that God accepts fallen man, in His Son. He reaches for the throne of God to hang man upon His Father's mercy.

Never had angels listened to such a prayer. They were solicitous (ready, willing, eager) to bear to the praying Redeemer messages of assurance and love. **But no**; the Father Himself will minister to His Son. Direct from the throne proceeded the Light of the glory of God. The heavens were opened, and beams of Light and glory proceeded there from and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. {YI, March 1, 1874 par. 4}

The people stood spell-bound with fear and amazement. Their eyes were fastened upon Christ, whose bowed form was bathed in the beautiful Light and glory that ever surround the throne of God. **His upturned face was glorified** as they had never before seen the face of man. The thunders rolled and the lightnings flashed from the opening heavens, and a Voice came therefrom in terrible majesty, saying . . . "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I Am well pleased !"

The Words of confirmation were given for the benefit of the witnesses at His baptism, and to assure God's dear Son that His Father accepted humanity through Him, their Substitute and Surety, and that God would connect man to Himself, and open Heaven to the prayers of men through the intercession of His Son.

Notwithstanding the sins of a guilty world were laid upon his Son, and he had humiliated himself to humanity to save the ruined race, Jehovah's Voice assured Christ of His Sonship with the Eternal. In this manifestation, God put His seal to the plan of redemption through His Son, and evidenced that He accepted humanity as exalted through the righteous character and divine excellence of His Beloved Son. **A way was opened for sinners** that, through obedience to God's law and faith in Christ as their Redeemer, they might form righteous characters and become children of God. {YI, March 1, 1874 par. 6}

As John witnessed the Saviour of the world bowed in the deepest humiliation, and pleading fervently with tears for the approval of his Father, he was deeply moved. As the Light and glory from Heaven enshrouded the Saviour, and a Voice was heard claiming Jesus as the Son of the Infinite, John saw the token God had promised him, and knew for a certainty that the world's Redeemer had received baptism at his hands. With transport of joy and tearful emotion he stretched forth his hand, and pointed to Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !"

This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for He was before me." "And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the Same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the Same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." And I saw the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove and overshadowing Him; and I heard the Voice of God bear record that **this is the Son of God !**

The Youth Instructor, March 1, 1874

"None among the hearers, and not even the speaker himself, discerned the import of these words, "the Lamb of God." Upon Mount Moriah, Abraham had heard the question of his son, "My father, . . . where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The father answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Genesis 22:7, 8. And in the ram divinely provided in the place of Isaac, Abraham saw a symbol of Him who was to die for the sins of men. The Holy Spirit through Isaiah, taking up the illustration, prophesied of the Saviour, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:7, 6); but the people of Israel had not understood the lesson. Many of them regarded the sacrificial offerings much as the heathen looked upon their sacrifices,--as gifts by which they themselves might propitiate the Deity. God desired to teach them **that from His own love for fallen man**, comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself. {DA 112.5}

And the Word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells us of the power of prayer,--how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The Voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, the most oppressed and despised, may find access to the Father. All may have a home in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; . . . behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:7, 8.

- Desire of Ages, p.112-113

"I present Jesus before you as the true pattern. He was the creator of the worlds, yet he consented to humble himself, to take upon himself man's nature, to live as a child, as a youth, in order that he might give

them a perfect example. He was subject to his parents, obeying the commandment of the Lord which says, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

There are many children and youth who see no attraction in Christ's life of humble toil and loving obedience; but it was for our sake, for our good, that he thus lived; for if he had chosen, he might have enjoyed the riches of glory. Even after He had proclaimed his divine relation to the Father, saying to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" he was still obedient to the claims of Mary and Joseph. For eighteen years after he had declared himself the Son of God, he submitted to a life of toil, of restraint, yielding submission to the authority of his parents.

He practiced self-denial, and worked with Joseph at the humble trade of a carpenter, thus forever dignifying toil. When we look upon his patient self-denial, his shrinking from all notoriety, devoting himself to his daily labor in a humble sphere, what a beautiful light is shed about his life! How clearly is pointed out the path in which children and youth should walk. If the youth would become strong in mind, pure in morals, firm in spiritual power, let them follow the example of Jesus in his simplicity, in his submission to parental restraint. For thirty years his life was veiled in obscurity; yet Jesus was no less the Son of God in his lowly home, in his submission to his parents, than when God spoke from his eternal throne, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased !"

- The

Youth Instructor, July 14, 1892

"After His baptism, Christ knelt on the banks of Jordan and offered prayer to His Father, And as He prayed, the heavens were opened, and the glory of God, like a dove of burnished gold, rested upon Him, while from the highest heaven there came the voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" [Matthew 3:17].

Christ's prayer was offered for us (in our place), and it cleaves through every shadow that Satan casts between us and God. **In our behalf** the Saviour laid hold of the power of Omnipotence, and as we pray to God, we may know that Christ's prayer has ascended before, and that God has heard and answered it. **With all our sins and weaknesses we are not cast aside as worthless.** *For* "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge (a guarantee) of the love of God for us.

It tells of the power of prayer --how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. **The Light that fell** from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour, will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The Voice that spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, "This is My beloved child, in whom I Am well pleased !"

- {1SAT 334.2}